

O D E

TO THE

GENIUS OF SCANDAL.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

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TO THE

GENIUS OF SCANDAL.

[Ascribed to Sheridan.]

QUI CAPIT, FACIT.

I SAY NOTHING!

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR G. KEARSLEY, AT NO. 46, IN FLEETSTREET.

M.DCC.LXXXI.

O D E

GENIUS OF SCANDIA

OUR COUNTRYMEN
I SAY NOTHING

PRINTED FOR C. KNEASS
LONDON
MILLS



THE Author of the following ODE, intending it solely for the amusement of his intimate acquaintance, printed only the requisite number of copies. One who has long been happy in his friendship, and who was favoured with the poem, thought a more enlarged publication might prove beneficial to mankind, in correcting an evil of which every one complains. With this view he offers it to the world, and he hopes the intention will justify the act.

If those who, with a taste for satire, possess the powers of ridicule, are, by the perusal, awakened to a sense of the unhappiness the indiscriminate exercise of that dangerous talent may possibly occasion to innocence and worth; and if the tranquility of an individual is preserved, the writer's wishes will be gratified.

To the Author no suitable excuse can be offered---but the motive. This, if his delicacy rejects, his heart must approve. To the Public no apology will be thought necessary; the spirit and elegance of the composition, the philanthropy it breathes, must recommend it to encomium, and secure to it the applause it so justly merits.

Cambridge, Oct. 30, 1781.

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Cambridge Oct. 30. 1787.

O D E.

O H! thou, whose all-consoling pow'r

Can soothe our cares to rest ;

Whose touch in Spleen's most vap'rish hour

Can calm each female breast ;

Thee I invoke ! Great Genius hear——

Pity a lady's sighs ;——

Without thy kind relief be near

Poor COQUETINA dies !

B

Haste

Haste thee, then, and with thee bring

Many a little venom'd sting;

Many a tale that no one knows

Of shall-be-nameless belles and beaux;

Just-imported curtain lectures,

Winks and nods, and shrewd conjectures;

Half a dozen strange suspicions

Built on stranger suppositions;

Unknown marriages some twenty,

Private child-bed linen plenty;

And horns just fitted to some people's heads,

And certain powder'd coats, and certain tumbled beds!

Teach me, powerful Genius! teach

Thine own mysterious art,

Safe from Retaliation's reach,

How I may throw detraction's dart!

So

So shall my hand an altar raise,
 Sacred to thy transcendent praise,
 And daily with assiduous care,
 Some grateful sacrifice prepare.

The first informations
 Of lost reputations
 As offerings to thee I'll consign,
 And the earliest news
 Of surpriz'd billet-doux
 Shall constant be serv'd at thy shrine.

Intrigues by the score,
 Never heard of before,
 Shall the sacrifice daily augment;
 And by each Morning Post
 Some favourite Toast
 A victim to thee shall be sent.

Heav'ns!

Heav'ns! methinks I see thy train
Softly tripping o'er the plain;
All the alphabet I view
Stepping forward two and two:
Hush! for as they coupled walk,
Sure I hear the letters talk!

Though lowly-fearful whisperings half smother
The well concerted tales they blab of one another:

- " Lord! who'd have thought our cousin *D*
- " Could think of marrying Mrs. *E*!
- " True, I don't like these things to tell,
- " But, faith! I pity Mr. *L*;
- " And was I he, the bride to vex,
- " I'd go and court my Lady *X*.
- " Indeed they say that Charlotte *U*,
- " With Fanny *M*, and we guess who,
- " Occasion'd all—for you must know
- " They fet their caps at Mr. *O*,

" And

- “ And as he courted Mrs. *E*,
 “ They thought if she'd have cousin *D*,
 “ That things might be, through Captain *A*,
 “ Just brought about in their own way!”

Oh! how the pleasing style regales my ear——!

Heav'ns! what new forms are these which now appear?

See yonder, in the thickest throng,

Designing Envy sculks along,

Big with malicious Laughter!

Fiction and Cunning swell her train;

While, stretching far behind, in vain

Poor Truth comes panting after.

Now, now indeed, I burn with sacred fires——

'Tis SCANDAL'S self that ev'ry thought inspires!

I feel, all-potent Genius! now I feel

Thy working magic through each art'ry steal.

C

At

At thy command my fancy warms,
 And sweetly paints the alter'd scene—
 Her touch now ev'ry grace deforms,
 And blackens ev'ry mien!

Each moment to my prying eyes
 Some fresh disfigur'd beauties rise:
 Each minute I perceive some flaw
 That e'en Ill-nature's self ne'er saw.

Hark! some airy whisp'rer hints,
 In accents wisely faint,
 That bright Cleora rather squints—
 Rosetta uses paint—

That though some fops of Celia prate,
 Yet be not her's the praise,
 For if she should be passing straight—
 Hem!—she may thank her stays!

Each fool of Delia's figure talks,
 And celebrates her fame;
 But, for my part, whene'er she walks,
 I think she's rather lame.

And

And mind Ma'am Chloe tofs her head!

Lord! how the creature stares!

Well!—I thank God it can't be said

I give myself those airs.

But soft! what figure's this I now see come?

His awful frown strikes even SCANDAL dumb——

Ah me! the blood forsakes my trembling cheek;

While sternly thus, methinks, I hear him speak:

Peace, snarling woman, peace!

'Tis CANDOUR bids thee cease——

CANDOUR—at whose insulted name

Even *thy* face should burn with shame!

Too long I've silent seen

The venom of thy spleen——

Too long, with secret pain,

Observ'd black SCANDAL's reign;

But now, with indignation stung,

Justice demands my tongue,

And bids me drag the lurking fiend to light,

And hold her deeds of darkness up to fight.

Look on this prospect! and if e'er thy brow
Can feel Compunction's sick'ning blush, 'tis now.

Mark yonder weeping maid,
Sadly deserted laid

Beside that mournful willow!

There ev'ry day, in silent woe,

She bids her tears incessant flow;

And ev'ry night forlornly pining,

Mute on her lilly hand reclining,

Bedews her waking pillow.

Sweet girl! she was once most enchantingly gay,
Each youth felt her charms, and acknowledg'd their sway;
No arts did she use to acquire a grace,
'Twas good humour alone that enliven'd her face;
Pure nature had leave in her actions to speak—
The wildness of youth gave the blush to her cheek,
And her looks uninstructed her thoughts would impart,
Since her eyes only flash'd from the warmth of her heart.

Herself

Herself undefining, no schemes she suspected—
 Ne'er dreaming of ambush, defence she neglected;
 With the youth that she lov'd, at the moon's silver hour,
 In confidence tender, she stole to the bow'r:
 There he hop'd to have all his desires obtain'd,
 But she spurn'd at the insult her virtue sustain'd;
 And he, in revenge for his baffled endeavour,
 Gave a hint,—'twas enough—she was ruin'd for ever!
 A thousand kind females the story augmented—
 Each day grinning Envy additions invented;
 Till fatiated Malice had gain'd all her ends,
 Had robb'd her of character—happiness—friends.

And now, sad innocent—alone—
 Shunn'd as a pest she makes her moan,
 And in unheard despair,
 Yields all resign'd to soul-consuming care.

D

Yet

Yet many a time her wand'ring brain
Turns with its fev'rish weight of pain,
And then a thousand childish things
The pretty mad one rudely sings;
Or mute on the ground she gazes,
And weeps as she scatters her daisies,
And then, in a strain more distractedly loud,
She chants the sad thoughts of her fancy,
And shivers and sings of her cold shroud—
Ah poor Nancy!

Nay, weep not now!—'tis now too late—
Thy friendship might have stopt her fate;
Rather now hide thy head in conscious shame—
Thy mouth too buzz'd the tale that stain'd her fame.

But come—again—turn here thine eyes,
And view another victim rise—
Observe that crested warrior!—his name
Could make whole hostile ranks disordered fly,
Victory follow'd where the hero came,
And conquest darted from his vengeful eye.

His

His was true courage on good prudence built—
 An arm prepar'd to extirpate or save:
 'Twas only rais'd to crush presuming guilt,
 Or lend its vigour to the honest brave.

Yet e'en a man thus form'd,
 With ev'ry nobler passion warm'd,
 At Envy's infamous command,
 Fell by dark SCANDAL's secret hand.
 Lothario, dearest of his friends,
 Wrong'd him—he scorn'd to ask amends—

In real valour calmness we admire,
 'Tis your mock honour that's so soon on fire.
 Souls truly great no rash resentments seek—
 His friendship pardon'd e'er his rage could speak.
 Yet, for a deed that challeng'd brightest fame,
 SCANDAL bedamn'd him with a coward's name;
 Nay, more secure her vengeance to pursue,
 Proclaim'd the man that own'd him coward too.

And

And see! with proudly swollen air

The injur'd hero stalks alone,

And, though his looks betray his care,

Disdains to vent a single groan:

Save when, by some distracting thought,

To wild impatience madly wrought,

With sudden stamp the ground he beats,

As Mem'ry paints his former feats,

How once knee-deep in blood

Immoveably he stood,

And in the howling battle's roar,

With gaping wounds all cover'd o'er,

His single arm durst firm oppose

A phalanx of assailing foes.

And mark! with starting rage possess'd,

Wildly he bares his furrow'd breast,

And as his scars he views with aching eyes,

"Oh! 'tis too much!" the fault'ring vet'ran cries—

Yet scorning still to let his pangs appear,

Bites hard his quiv'ring lip, and gulps the starting tear!

These

These are the triumphs SCANDAL claims—
 Triumphs deriv'd from ruin'd names—
 Such as, to generous minds unknown,
 An honest soul would scorn to own.
 Nor think, vain woman, while you sneer
 At others faults, that you are clear;
 No!—turn your back—you undergo
 The self-same malice you to others show,
 And soon by some malicious tale o'erthrown,
 Like these shall fall, unpitied, and unknown!

Oh! then, ye blooming fair attend—
 Oh! take kind CANDOUR for your friend,
 Nor forfeit, for a mean delight,
 That pow'r o'er man that's yours by right.

To woman ev'ry charm was giv'n,
 Design'd by all indulgent Heav'n
 To soften every care.
 Yes! ye were form'd to bless mankind,
 To harmonize and soothe the mind,
 And guard us from despair.

But when from those sweet lips we hear,

Ill-nature's whisper, Envy's sneer;

Your pow'r that moment dies.

Each coxcomb makes your name his sport,

And fools when angry will retort

What men of sense despise.

Leave, then, such low pursuits as these,

And take a nobler road to please—

Let CANDOUR guide your way—

So shall you daily conquests gain,

And captives glorying in your chain,

Be proud to own your sway.

THE END